MEMORANDUM

TO: Steven Rockefeller
Arlinda Ardister

FROM: J. Flickinger J. Flickinger

RE: Bread Loaf Faculty Meeting, September 1, 1981

DATE: September 2, 1981

Following is a summary of discussion which took place in the group led by Chaplain Scott and Arlinda Aridster following the general presentations in the Little Theatre.

1.) There was general reaction of concern and some distress to Arlinda Aridster's and Michael Olinick's description of problems in black-white relations at Middlebury, and the feeling expressed that a way should be found to raise the consciousness of faculty and students to some of these problems.

2.) Discussion of questions about special grading, and special treatment of Black and Hispanic students took up a large part of the session. There seemed to be general acknowledgement that there was often a more gentle grading of freshmen who needed help in catching up--particularly in writing courses--and that there might occasionally be instances of grade elevation to avoid giving failing grades. Consensus was that special treatment (special individual help and guidance) was appropriate and justified and could be provided without lowering grading standards.

3.) Admissions policies and responsibilities were discussed--the need to seek a more diversified student body, white as well as black, and the importance of informing Black and Hispanic applicants what to expect here academically and socially.

4.) The importance of regarding Black and Hispanic students as individuals and avoiding categorizing or grouping came up in the discussion over and over. The Black and Hispanic students now attending Middlebury come from varied backgrounds, usually from racially mixed communities, and they resent being treated as an homogenous group.

5.) The desirability of encouraging activity of more evenly racially mixed groups was discussed, with the success of the recent pre-enrollment group (fifty percent black/fifty percent white) an example.

6.) There were several expressions of discouragement about the negative impact of the morning's presentation--failure of the hopes of the King Commission, the leveling off of the numbers of minority students, the failure to attract black faculty, and the impression that Black and Hispanic students generally did not feel good about their experience at Middlebury. There seemed to be agreement that the basic commitment of the College to vigorous recruitment of minorities should continue to be supported, but that we would be failing if we did not find ways to make the total experience here a good one for these students.

7.) Discussion was just beginning to focus on support programs and curriculum when the meeting ran out of time.